A Greek Tragedy

As the family crisis dissipated, we moved on to a Pentagon assignment. The rank of Lt.Col was bestowed upon George, and he was now on the Air Force's fast track The world was about to change. In 2000 (Y2K), concerns that computer systems would fail proved unfounded. World politics, however, remained tense.

My husband was up for an overseas assignment. To check off as many boxes as possible in pursuit of General, he chose the unaccompanied tour to Araxos, Greece. It was a one-year assignment. Alone. By himself.

Secrecy governed this assignment, whereas he was tasked in commanding the removal of several nuclear warheads from the military base. Once the mission was successfully accomplished, LtCol Weil succumbed to his weaker desires.

With the swagger of a James Bond wanna-be, George encouraged the coy smile of his female administration sergeant. The First Sergeant caught wind of this career snuffing tryst and tried to 'save' their base commander, by sending the female sergeant back to the States ASAP.

But the Fates would not be denied. Once LtCol Weil rotated back to the Pentagon again, the wheels of justice began to roll. However, the military needed all hands-on deck after 9/11 in 2001. The investigation into conduct unbecoming an officer gained momentum but remained quiet for several years. As LtCol Weil was coming up for promotion again, he made the list for Colonel easily. Not wishing to embarrass the Pentagon with yet another 'bad boy' story in the local press – they sent the "devil down to Georgia."

The Pentagon sent their prize pupil down to Warner-Robbins AFB, Georgia, to die quietly. The base commander was plenty mad to see his new hire slapped with a military court marshal and early discharge. Colonel Weil was allowed to keep his rank, but his paygrade was reduced to that of Major – the last rank he had served honorably. Or so they thought.

Ironically – I first learned of this infidelity from Randolph, while it was happening! Turned out, his stepson was stationed in Araxos, Greece at the same time George was their Base Commander!

For the time we were still at the Pentagon, and later in Georgia, I was aware George kept in contact with his Greek siren. After she was discharged from the service, and aborted their 'love child', my husband still felt obligated to support her.

I began to see my husband as a lost cause. Therefore, my focus was to remain cheerful, supportive and engaging with our daughter, Crystal. Our ability to remain in one place for several years (1998 – 2005) enabled us to buy our second home in Woodbridge, Virginia, for 152K. (it sold for 391K!) Crystal graduated Suma Cum Laud from high school, then Magna Cum Laud in computer science from Virgina Tech. A talent scout from Lockheed-Martin was wise to offer her employment. She was also able to cultivate real friends. Friends that she had needed for a long time.

To fill my many hours alone, I picked up employment at Michael's Art store as a picture framer. One afternoon, a woman toting a large binder came into the frame shop. I was curious as to the binder's contents, and the customer was happy to talk about her research into her family history. Years earlier, young Crystal had a class assignment to quiz her grandparents on the family tree. The letter from my dad's mother, Ruby Low, was a treasure trove! It led to my research through (*my favorite*) LDS Church and their immense online archives. Turned out, one of those Scottish ancestors helped General Washington take Trenton after a snowy crossing of the Delaware River! I successfully demonstrated my lineage to be recognized as a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution in July 2008, with membership number #863798.

Lilies, cont'd from page 1

Meet Your Neighbor

A surprise awaits in cross-pollinated lilies

By Diane Dehlsmer
Chino Valley Review

When one's spouse is in the military, the family is constantly moving, which was the case with Teresa and George Weil.

"We traveled across the nation for 30 years, but Georgia was finally stationed in Virginia, where we were able to stay for about six years. That was where my love of daylilies took off," Teresa said. "I started gardening and purchased some daylilies. When the first one bloomed into this glowing, huge

Courtesy photos
Those four flowers, at right, all had the same parents and all came from the same seed pod.

Chino Valley resident, Teresa Weil, separates daylilies for replanting. Above right, this yellow daylily Gladder Miracle is the one that got Teresa focused on daylilies.

Courtesy photos

Rainbows Rest = 773 S. Maple Lane

To stay busy, I also dove into a total makeover of the backyard of our home at 14181 Rockinghorse Dr. I moved tons of dirt, gravel and cement blocks to create beautiful, raised flower beds. I discovered the satisfaction of breeding daylilies and growing new cultivars. By the time we had to leave for Georgia, I took over 100 of my best creations with us. (Plus 2 cats and 4 fancy color corn snakes.)

During this timeframe, one of Crystal's friends captured her heart, and they fell in love. She and Carlos made a handsome couple. They made a commitment to each other by getting engaged.

Crystal stayed in Virginia to attend college while George and I moved to Warner-Robbins AFB in 2005. I'm glad she stayed behind and was not witness to her father's fall from grace. (I was able to hide his disgrace for another 10 years.)

As reality settled into our shortened Air Force career, we took our first family vacation together. From Disney World in Florida, all 3 of us boarded a cruise ship to Tulum, Mexico. The grandeur of the ancient ruins was eclipsed by the antics of a tour guide 'sic'ing' a huge iguana on a pretty girl. The rotund reptile was focused on a banana the guide had just given her. The girl screamed and ran as the iguana chased after the banana she was holding.

Now we had to figure out where to 'retire'. That was left to me, since George was still dealing with his Greek siren. I flew home to Riverside, CA and picked up my mom, Kay, for a house hunting adventure. We drove over to Chino Valley, Arizona, where Kay's brother Kent had been living since 1973. We found a 'small' (1496 sf) 3-year-old house on the edge of town, in a nice neighborhood. We were able to secure a bank loan easily, since George was still technically in the military and making good money.

Uncle Kent kept an eye on the property for us until we could move there in September 2006.

If watching your career implode was not bad enough for George, the death of his mother Delphine was life changing. January 2006 witnessed the passing of Delphine E. Castillo at the age of 92. Her daughter and son were by her side when she died in Los Angeles. George and I flew there to attend the funeral, but he did not understand who those people were at the funeral home. Delphine's son was known to George as 'uncle', and he didn't remember any daughter.

Long story short, at the age of 50, George E. Weil learns his life has been a lie. His mother was his grandmother, and his uncle was his real father.

George was lost and angry. His whole world crumbled. He had no idea who he was anymore. For a moment he looked to me for solace, and I was there.

As we flew back to Georgia, our aircraft was struck by lightning! The cabin flashed and the loud 'BOOM" caused numerous screams from passengers. I was aware the aircraft outer 'skin' was designed to disperse an electrical charge, and I was just awestruck at the sheer 'luck' of experiencing such an event. The pilot announced to the passengers that this had been a first for him as well. I can only speculate that Delphine was saying 'goodbye.'

After our forced retirement and settlement in Arizona, my parents made a leap of faith and moved to Arizona as well – two blocks away from us! Giving up the 6808 Neil St. homestead and proximity to only son Brian; who lived next-door; was a big deal. Kay Low was adamant though….it was HER turn to enjoy the daughter she lost years ago. We were both happy to sell our homes in California and Virginia at the height of the market and move to Arizona. The market crash of 2008 was a surprise and left many homeowners' 'underwater' mortgage wise.

As we settled in, our daughter Crystal was ready for a change as well. She and fiancée' Carlos flew out from Virginia to meet the family and declare their intentions. The visit went well, except…. Carlos was having a hard time securing the courage to ask Mr. Weil for his daughter's hand in marriage. In frustration, Crystal and I deposited the young suitor outside the Masonic Lodge meeting hall – where George was currently ensconced. Carlos rode home with George, and they talked.

George put his foot between them, and basically broke his daughter's heart, by refusing to give Carlos his blessing. Carlos called off the engagement.

Two years later Crystal presented her Virginia Tech classmate, Jaime Garcia Ramirez, to us as a suitor. Thankfully, George accepted him. They married in July 2009.

As dust settled in our lives, reality demanded more income to sustain our new home. George humbly applied and was accepted at the local feed store. Chino Valley was rural and only had three traffic lights along the main drag of State Highway 89. Life settled at a more leisurely pace.

With my mother and father just a short walk away, I enjoyed reconnecting with them. Dad tackled upgrades of greenhouses, raised planter beds and a fountain while mom continued her gardening and fiber art projects. She and I both took top honors at the Yavapai County Fair.

On one outing with mom, I retrieved a large blue hardcover book from a dumpster. It was the History of the 99's (Women in Aviation). That fortuitous find and subsequent eavesdropping on another woman's conversation led to an introduction to local legend Irene H. Leverton of Mercury 13 fame. She was no longer flying and lived alone among all her awards, trophies and memorabilia. Before long I befriended Irene and helped her with daily life. In time I asked for her permission to digitize her flight logs, photo albums, important papers and news articles. All information related to Irene has been stored on a thumb drive, which was donated to the Military Women's Memorial in Arlington, VA.

George and I were happy to be around my family, and we all got along very well. I sincerely hoped we could put the past behind us. I used part of the proceeds from the sale of the Rockinghorse property, to purchase a new set of wedding rings. *Yet, it was no use*. His wandering eye and Latin swagger lassoed yet another weak-willed woman into his arms. After THAT revelation, I smashed my wedding ring into oblivion. Indifferent to my feelings, but concerned with his image, George dove into the Fraternal Order of Free Masons.

I could only see the hypocrisy of his actions. Mom's father, Douglas K. Hodgeson, had been a 32-degree Mason, and it felt wrong for me to see George hold such a similar honor. As he strove to reinvent himself, I focused on home improvement projects; anything to keep from imploding.

Still reeling from yet another betrayal, I told George I wanted to see my friend from the Air Force.

Without hesitation or concern George simply said, '*Fine*.'

To see Robert again was that breath of fresh air my sorry soul needed. He was still married, and I wondered if his wife was completely aware where her husband had gone. I made it clear this was a 'hands off' visit. I was not about to commit the same mistakes my husband had.

The advice Robert gave me pertaining to George was of little consolation - '*Guys just get bored*.'

So, I continued to suffer in silence. My demeanor remained cheerful, yet my soul had begun to wither. I was 60 years old. It was 2015.

But now, as one door closed, another was about to open – with the clank of an old bell, and it changed EVERYTHING!